EX-CHP OFFICER CLAIMS NO INTENT TO HARM IN CHILD-SEX CASE | THE FUTURE OF HIP-HOP IS ROLLING LOUD | REMEMBERING THE MIGHTY 690'S TREASURE HUNT

OC WEEKLY

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MOON EYES CAR SHOW IN IRWINDALE

JOHN GILHOOLEY

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Photo by Renee Chartier
Design by Richie Beckman

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OC WEEKLY

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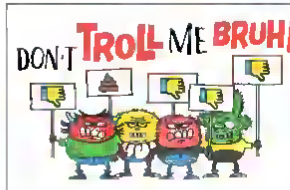


Let's create 100 percent single-gender, segregated educational institutions and workplaces. Let female scientists, administrators, janitors, etc. be wholly responsible for running the 100 percent female organizations. Having attended an all-male high school, I know the 100 percent male [institutions and workplaces] will flourish spectacularly. Males can do everything to run an organization without women inside.

—*Andy, commenting on Anthony Pignataro's "The Honorable Francisco Ayala Problem. A Dozen UC Irvine Professors Express 'Himpathy' Toward Disgraced Colleague Francisco Ayala"*

**Our response:** "Hey, Andy, did Mike Pence put you up to this?"

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# 'No Kissing and No Hugs'

## Ex-California Highway Patrol officer claims a sore throat proves no intent in child-sex case

A former California Highway Patrol (CHP) lieutenant—who made internet contact with a 13-year-old girl and, among other things, told her he sought to feel her without a condom and wanted to get her pregnant—hopes an Orange County jury believes he did not plan to engage in lewd contact when a law-enforcement sting caught him rendezvousing with the minor.

In his Dec. 11 opening statement, defense attorney John Barnett conceded that his client, Stephen Robert Deck, unwittingly sent "dirty talk," "sexually charged" and "very unpleasant" text and chatroom messages to a police decoy during a six-day period in February 2006 but had innocent motives when he drove an hour at night from his San Diego County home to Laguna Beach.

**moxley CONFIDENTIAL**

» R. SCOTT MOXLEY

"[Deck] didn't intend to have sex with that girl that night," Barnett told a jury of seven men and five women. "[When he was arrested,] he does talk to the police, and he tells them, 'You have an intent problem,' and he's right."

Deputy District Attorney Robert Mestman must have felt déjà vu. In 2009, Mestman battled the same argument and won a conviction against Deck, who was given a punishment of probation because the judge, M. Marc Kelly, thought cops should receive leniency when they break the law. The California Court of Appeal upheld the conviction two years later.

But in 2014, a divided three-judge panel at U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit overturned the case. Judges Sidney R. Thomas and Morgan Christen opined that Mestman botched his closing argument by telling the jury the defendant didn't necessarily need to intend sexual contact on the night of the arrest as long as he planned an attempted lewd act on the child "at just some point in the future." The dissenting judge, Milan D. Smith Jr., believed the panel should have accepted the decision of the state appellate court, which had considered the defense argument and determined the prosecutor's error was harmless. Smith also noted that regardless of Mestman's mistake, the trial judge properly instructed the jury on the law.

"[Deck] had sexual intent when he drove up to Laguna Beach," Mestman told the new jury in his opening statement. "I am confident you will find he attempted a lewd act."

RICHIE HECKMAN

According to the prosecutor, Deck—a boss at the CHP office in San Juan Capistrano during the alleged crime—fretted online with "Amy," the purported minor, that he didn't want to be caught having sex with her because he'd go "to prison with some huge guy named Buhba sharing his cell." The cop also worried in chats about Perverted Justice, the nonprofit group popularized nationally by NBC's *To Catch a Predator* series. At the time, he was unaware of Amy's real identity: Carolyn Graham, a Mississippi native with a heavy twang who worked for Perverted Justice, for which she created fake photo and identity profiles of minor boys and girls and waited for adults to make contact.

During chats, Graham repeatedly told Deck she was of middle-school age and the then-51-year-old officer, who pretended he was 47, responded by ridiculing laws banning sex between adults and minors, asking her when her parents weren't home and prodding for her interest in performing oral sex as well as her willingness to call him "Daddy."

Mestman says the cop, who was well aware of police-sting tactics, "set up" a potential defense "just in case" he'd been snared in a Perverted Justice operation by making statements to the decoy that he wasn't interested in sex shortly before he drove to meet her. The move was nothing more than "planting the seed" for an intent defense, the prosecutor argued. "He [was] so sexually charged."

But Barnett, one of Southern California's legendary defense lawyers who specializes in representing accused police officers, told jurors that his client genuinely didn't plan for sex on the night of the meeting at a park because he had a sore throat. "The last words he typed before heading out the door [to drive to Laguna Beach from Oceanside] were '[I'm sick, so] no kissing and no hugs,'" said Barnett, who claims the motive for the trip was to see if their personalities were compatible in person. "He specifically tells her, 'We're not having any sexual contact.'"

Mestman called Graham as his first witness and let the jury hear recordings of calls between Deck and the decoy, who sounded like a giddy 10-year-old. In response to her question about what he planned to do with her, the CHP officer said he wanted to go out to dinners, movies "and places where you aren't going to see any of your friends." She followed up, asking if they'd "do boyfriend/girlfriend stuff?" He replied, "Absolutely."

It's a unique courtroom battle, not just because the case is 668 weeks old. If this jury finds him guilty, Deck won't face a minute of prison. He'll only be required to continue sex-offender registration.

RSCOTTMOXLEY@OCWEEKLY.COM

**POLITICAL FOOTBALL**
» STEVE LOWERY

## Washington R&%*#!*s vs. Jacksonville Jaguars

**Washington update:** Washington really is an exceptional sports franchise, not only laying claim to being one of the NFL's original teams but also having, hands down, the most offensive nickname in American sports. Add to that the impressive boast that its founder, George Preston Marshall, is the most racist owner in American sports history, which is exceptionally impressive given that it's a history that includes Donald Sterling and Tom Yawkey and every NFL owner that colludes to keep Colin Kaepernick out of work. Of course, Marshall, who refused to integrate his team—capitulating only in 1962 when threatened by Bobby Kennedy, is long dead, having settled into an eternity of being one of Satan's side bitches, we assume. Still, current owner Dan Snyder keeps his memory alive by not only refusing to change the nickname—claiming it is part of the team's tradition, someone want to explain the Confederate flag to him—but also maintaining an atmosphere in which ugliness and grossness and awfulness are free to bloom. The latest example is Mr. Rueben Foster, a beauty who was cut by the San Francisco 49ers after his second arrest for domestic violence and was considered radioactive by all NFL teams — except Washington, which signed him immediately. Soon after, Washington quarterback Alex Smith was lost for the season with a broken leg. The team had no real backup but still refused to even talk to Kaepernick. So, make a symbolic gesture to bring attention to violence visited upon a particular segment of the population—no, visit violence upon a woman multiple times, and welcome aboard. Tradition!

**Jacksonville update:** It's been a horrible year in Jacksonville. It's *Jacksonville*.

**Root for:** Jacksonville. When Marshall died in 1969, his will stipulated that none of his money go toward "any purpose which supports the principle of racial integration in any form." The NFL, true to *its* tradition, inducted him into the Pro Football Hall of Fame a few years later. We take some heart that whenever Rams great Deacon Jones was in Washington for a game, he would make sura to visit Marshall's stadium statue and spit on it. That and the fact that Satan is reputed to be a very selfish lover with nasty-ass toenails.

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

## High Holidays

» MATT COKER

ZOMA CANNABIS

Ah, the winter holidays, when chestnuts roast on an open fire, Jack Frost nips at your nose and everybody knows some Mistletoke makes the season high.

Yep, there is actually limited-edition holiday décor out there called Mistletoke that features boughs of mistletoe intertwined with trimmed buds of Zoma EnvirOganic cannabis. The idea is that you hang Mistletoke as you would mistletoe, although there are no instructions from Zoma as to whether someone who stands under it is supposed to immediately press lips with a loaded spliff, pipe or bong.

The "boutique cannabis" company does advise the following: "Once the holidays are over, you can easily smoke the Mistletoke—just snap off each nug of flower without compromising the mistletoe branches. Wrapped in a big red bow, each Mistletoke is made-to-order for each of its lucky recipients."

So how much? Nothing—if you are among the first 50 people who email info@zomacannabis.com. Those lucky elves will have Mistletoke delivered directly to their addresses. Wotta country!

Recipients further have the option to donate to One Tree Planted, a reforestation charity that's helping to make things right again following California's devastating wildfires of last season and this current one. Zoma says it will match every dollar raised.

Zoma also has you covered when ringing in the new year by offering the option of skipping the traditional flute of Champs and instead lighting up a Champagne preroll, which is made from a cannabis strain known as Banjo OG, a hybrid of Tangelo and Boost OG. It's said to have a sweet citrus flavor and fragrant aroma that make it "the perfect addition to your holiday happenings."

The Champagne prerolls retail at $45 for a six-pack containing 4.5 grams of flower. All products are legally compliant and sealed in odor free, childproof packaging. Get them through zomacannabis.com.

"EnvirOganic certified and ethically grown, you can rest assured Mother Nature is looking out for you this High Holiday season," says Zoma of its "perfect stocking stuffer" that "won't break the bank."

Between the nugs off the Mistletoke and the Champagne prerolls, I suggest also stocking up on pumpkin pies.

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

## HeyYou!

» ANONYMOUS

### Keep My Tab Open

BOB AUL

You are the young (compared to me) man who guarded my debit card behind the microbrewery bar after I left with family for dinner without having first closed my tab. I discovered my suds-fueled absent-mindedness upon trying to pay for dinner, which of course produced a chorus of "Sure, you left your debit card at the micro-brewery!" As soon as I walked back through your door, you and your coworkers remarked that I looked like someone who had forgotten something. Thinking back, I should have tipped more!

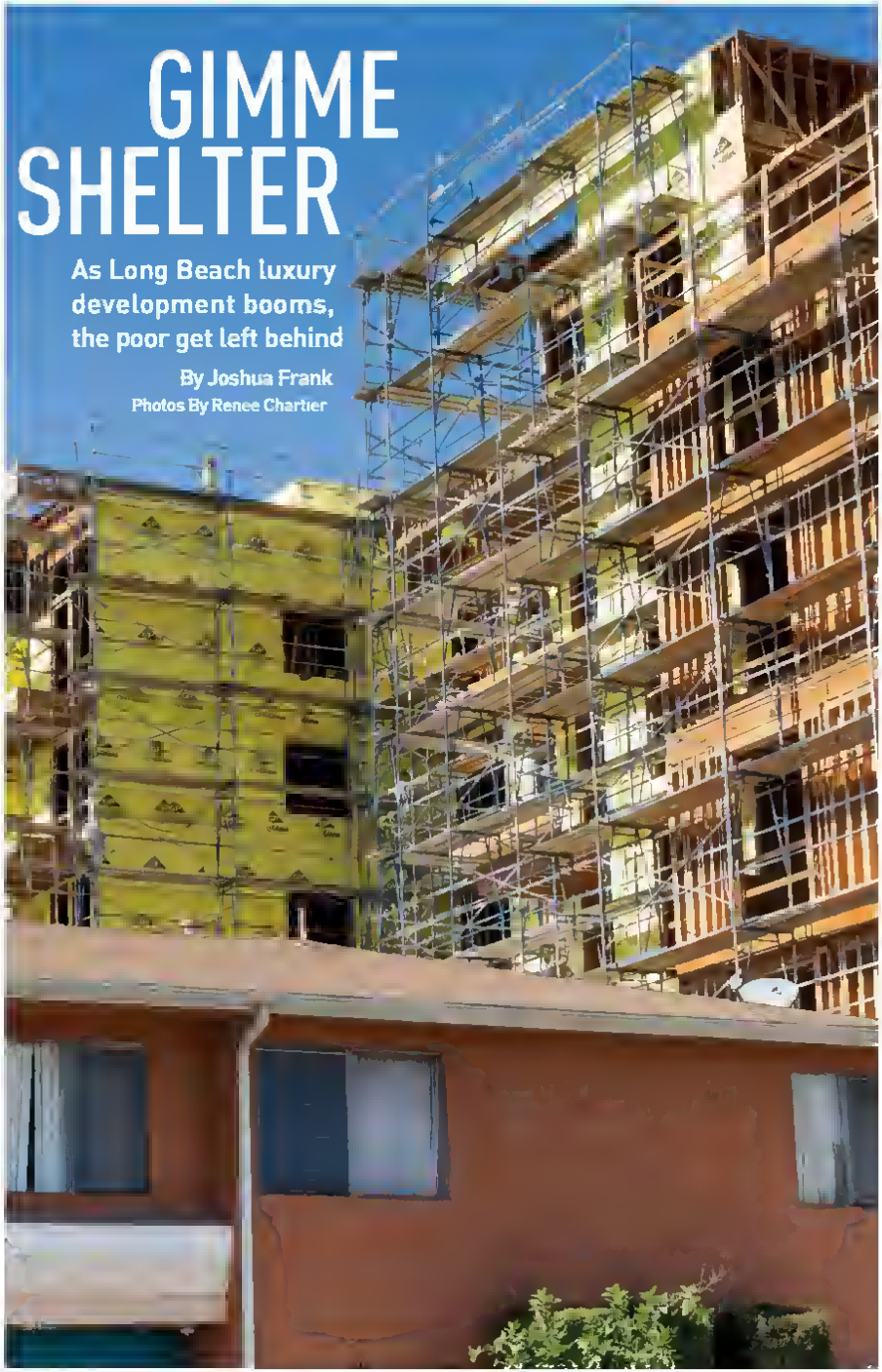
**HEY, YOU!** Send anonymous thanks, confessions or accusations—changing or deleting the names of the guilty and innocent—to "Hey You!" c/o *OC Weekly* 18475 Bandilier Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708, or email us at letters@ocweekly.com.

# GIMME SHELTER

## As Long Beach luxury development booms, the poor get left behind

By Joshua Frank

Photos By Renee Chartier



It was a stifling mid-August afternoon when Jennifer learned she had until the end of the year to move out of her cramped studio apartment in the East Village of downtown Long Beach. She suspected the eviction was coming. For the past year, she had been looking for a new place as her landlord slowly remodeled her modest building, the place she's called home for more than 13 years. He knew she could not pay the increase in rent, so he told her it was time to go. Jennifer, who is in her 50s, qualified for Section 8 low-income housing and searched futilely for an opening in the area. There was nothing she could afford to live in and not a single Section 8 apartment was vacant.

Five years ago, Jennifer lost mobility in her right leg because of diabetes. Confined to a wheelchair, she still managed to take classes at Cerritos College and work a part-time job. She slogged her way around town on the bus and never complained that her apartment was located up a narrow flight of wooden stairs. She simply collapsed her wheelchair and scooted her rear end up each step to her front door, making the trip more than once if she had groceries or extra bags to bring in. Her daughter used to help with the rent and daily chores, but she left Long Beach three years ago to attend a trade school on the East Coast. "It would have been better to be on the first floor, but I couldn't afford to move," Jennifer says. "I've been searching for a place to live, a unit that can accommodate my wheelchair and kitties, but I can't find a single one, anywhere. My landlord sent me listings to Section 8 places, but they are ones I've already called about that don't really exist. I'll probably end up sleeping in an RV."

I've known Jennifer for seven years, as well as the building she's being forced to move out of. The landlords are an older couple who live in a well-to-do area of Long Beach, and according to public documents, they bought the rental building more than 20 years ago. The owners did not respond to several requests to be interviewed, but tenants believe they are nearing retirement age and may sell the apartment complex in the near future.

Jennifer's rent of $700 is well below the current market value for the area, which has been rising almost remorselessly for the past four years. Once Jennifer and her two cats are out, her unit's new cost could exceed $1,200, which is $200 more than her entire monthly budget. She's in a definite bind, one created by her own misfortune, a housing market gone wild and a city that has virtually no protections for renters.

"If I can't find a place, I'm going to be homeless. I won't have a choice," she confesses, as she stands in a litter-strewn alley below her bedroom window. "If I'm living on the street in an RV, will you promise not to call the cops on me?"

"We don't believe that rent control works or is the right solution,"

Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia bluntly stated in January during a community meeting held at the Art Theater "Just look at rent-controlled cities like San Francisco, the most expensive market in the country."

With his jet black hair and made-for-TV grin, the stylish Garcia—who says he despises President Donald Trump and advertises his liberal credentials on his lively Twitter feed—is by all accounts a pro-growth, corporate Democrat and proud of it. Some might even call him a free-market neoliberal when it comes to his attitudes toward urban development and housing. In an April piece for *The New York Times* that touted the $3.5 billion of construction flooding Long Beach, Garcia championed the myriad of changes taking place in the downtown corridor, but he failed to mention any of the development's negative impacts, such as the displacement of some of the city's more vulnerable residents who can't keep up with the rising rents. Much of Long Beach's new development money is being funneled into luxury housing projects, thousands of units of which are currently planned or under construction. "The downtown is being reborn and re-created ... and I'm really excited about the transformation," Garcia boasted.

Garcia and fellow opponents of rent control may point to San Francisco's high rental costs as a failure, but advocates counter that, while not perfect, rent control has largely worked in that city despite industry-created loopholes and speculator abuse, noting that even data in a study critical of the practice conducted by three Stanford professors showed that "rent control increased the probability a renter stayed at their address by close to 20 percent." Keeping renters in their homes, say rent control's proponents, is exactly what the protections are designed to accomplish.

However, the future of increased rent control in the state is uncertain. Voters across California rejected Proposition 10 earlier this month, which would have allowed cities to expand local ordinances.

In 2012, the Long Beach City Council passed an expansion of the Downtown Plan, which mapped out development for 725 acres in the city's urban core. The update helped to fast-track development by removing certain environmental reviews from the permitting process. Josh Butler, executive director of Housing Long Beach, and others opposed the plan on the grounds it could displace as many as 20,000 residents and increase traffic pollution. At the time, Garcia was a councilman and voted in favor of the development plan. He also opposed a motion put forth by Councilwoman Gerrie Schipske that would have set aside 10 percent of new apartments for low-income residents. "The Downtown Plan put the gas pedal down on gentrification and never looked back," says Butler.

A Downtown Long Beach Market Study released in 2009 by the now-defunct Long Beach Redevelopment Agency, noted that of the more than 31,000 residents who lived in the city's downtown, 75 percent were low-income renters with little to on economic safety net. Most were people of color. For the residents who qualified as Extremely Low Income (ELIs), households whose income is 30 percent below the median income line, affordable housing is severely lacking. According to data released in July by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the Los Angeles/Long Beach area has a meager 17 affordable and available rental units per 100 ELIs, which means more than 80 percent of people in need of low rent are shit out of luck.

By its own accounting, Long Beach is lagging grossly behind in the number of low-to-moderate-income housing it ought to provide to its poorer residents. In 2014, the local government adopted its General Plan, which included a goal of 4,009 affordable housing units to be built by 2022. As of 2017, the city had only permitted 322 units. At this pace, it will fall far short of reaching that goal. On the flip side, Long Beach is constructing thousands of market-rate units, most of which are located in the downtown area.

Garcia's housing policy openly adheres to the "filtering theory," which is akin to the trickle-down economic theory infamously promoted by President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s and has been more recently endorsed by Trump and the Tea Party wing of the Republican Party. In an interview with the *Long Beach Business Journal* in August 2017, Garcia, while admitting the city needs more affordable housing, also embraced the notion that construction of market-rate housing will eventually trickle down to those in need. "The only way to address affordable housing is to build housing of all types.

We're building a lot of market-rate housing because you get folks into those homes, which then open up other homes that can be affordable," he said.

The "filtering theory" has been directly challenged by researchers, most recently at UC Berkeley's Institute for Policy Government Studies, which noted that in a city such as San Francisco, it would take at least 30 years for "filtering" to produce anything considered affordable. Additionally, the researchers argue, massive construction of market-rate housing would immediately accelerate rent increases in urban areas, adding that their analysis shows "subsidized housing has double the impact of market-rate development" in mitigating displacement. In short, new housing built for the more affluent doesn't help poorer renters who are in need of assistance today. Housing advocates argue this data is proof Long Beach ought to be focusing on affordable and not market-rate housing if the city is going to protect its existing, lower-income residents.

"If I'm living on the street in an RV, will you promise not to call the cops on me?"

Butler points out that Long Beach has the largest population of renters from San Diego to Seattle that lack any form of protections. If a popular Democrat such as Garcia, who was re-elected this year by 79 percent of voters, can't get behind measures to protect his city's renters, Butler wonders, what elected official will? "It's a total crisis," says Butler. "The city isn't doing nearly enough to protect its long-time residents."

Today, Long Beach landlords are only required to provide tenants with a 60-day notice of eviction for those who have been in their units for more than a year and a 30-day notice for renters who have lived in their residences for less than that. As long as renters are paying rent month to month, landlords can kick them out without any reason. Housing Long Beach is fighting to stop this by pressing the city to pass a Responsible Renter's Ordinance, also known as a "just-cause eviction." While it's not rent control, the law—which is already on the books in large cities such as Chicago, Seattle and Oakland—is meant to stem the tide of mass evictions.

A more robust rent-control initiative launched by Butler's group failed to garner enough signatures to qualify for the the November ballot after an intense anti-rent-control campaign was waged by a handful of worried property owners who feared the measure would cut into their profit margins. The attacks on the initiative were spearheaded by Keith Kennedy, president of the Small Property Owners Alliance, a group he formed to combat the community's push for renters' rights. "Unfortunately, certain special interest groups are using this opportunity to push radical, destructive and reactionary price-fixing policies that will help to turn back the city to— bleaker years," Kennedy wrote in an op-ed for *The Grunion*. "Our local officials have wisely resisted rent control, and our organization will continue to work to ensure they embrace competition over destructive regulations."

Kennedy, who is a landlord in Long Beach, isn't the only one pushing back against renters organizing to protect their interests and fight the rising rents. Joani Weir, who owns a downtown rental complex, founded Better Housing for Long Beach, an astroturfing group that doesn't so much advocate for better housing, but rather opposes all efforts to enact rent control and eviction protections. In KCET's *City Rising*, a documentary that investigates the driving forces behind gentrification in California, Weir informs a room of agreeable onlookers that "renters have more rights than property owners."

"That's a fabricated narrative," counters Susanne Browne, a senior attorney for Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles who has worked on housing and land-use issues in Long Beach for more than 20 years. "From my first-hand experience working with tenants, I can assure you that [Weir's assertion is] unequivocally 100 percent *false*. We're in the midst of an absolute housing catastrophe and

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

## Events at Newport Dunes

Heatbeat City
Tribute to The Cars
Friday, December 28th

Dead Man's Party
At Back Bay Bistro
Saturday, December 29th

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Saturday, December 29th

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# GIMME SHELTER

» FROM PAGE 9

renters in Long Beach have virtually no rights or protections."

During the push to place rent control on Long Beach's city ballot this year, Weir's organization was accused of meddling with the signature gathering by employing real-life trolls, as well as passing out racially charged fliers in opposition to the measure. Weir denies the allegations.

"The whole experience was pretty disheartening," admits Butler. "The tactics to disrupt our signature efforts were unlike anything I'd ever seen. It got very dirty very fast."

The quaint neighborhood on the east side of St. Anthony High School is quintessential urban Long Beach. Bungalow craftsman homes are surrounded by older apartment complexes with sun-faded paint. Bars remain on some windows, remnants of a bygone era when this part of town was haunted by gang violence and petty theft. Most of the people who live on this stretch of Lime Avenue are renters, some remember the old days and appreciate the changes, but they are wary of what the future may hold.

It's mid-September and nearly 90 degrees at 7 p.m. A fresh hint of marijuana floats by as I stroll down the sidewalk. Two stray cats wrestle in a front yard before scurrying for cover under a parked work truck. Mumbling under his breath, an older black gentleman with a graying beard pushes a shopping cart full of bottles and cans across the middle of the intersection as a car honks in annoyance. Nearby, a group of boys bounce a tennis ball back and forth, while one of their mothers plays video poker on her smartphone, wishing the small fortune she had accumulated was real.

The mother, Rosa, who is in her late-20s, brought her children out to the street to escape the stale humidity in their apartment. The family has one rickety air-conditioning unit jangling out the bedroom window, but it doesn't do much good, she says, it only circulates hot air and sucks up too much electricity. They are on a budget these days. Rosa, who grew up in the South Bay, says her young family has lived in the one-bedroom apartment for three years, and even though she feels at home in this colorful community, she fears it might not last for much longer.

"Rents are going crazy," she says, pointing to a "For Rent" sign on the building next door, which is asking $1,250 for a studio—an apartment that just two years ago would have gone for $800 or less. "If ours goes any higher, we'll have to move out. My husband and I both work, but it's not enough. We'll probably end up with family in Carson."

Rents are going up fast everywhere in Long Beach. Just two blocks north of Lime Avenue lives Dione McCrea, who saw her one-bedroom apartment climb last spring from $1,050 to $2,000 and was given 60 days to decide if she could pay the increase. If she couldn't pay the new cost, her property manager told her, she'd have to pack it up. "In my building, there were four units—everyone got an increase," says McCrea, who described her building as dilapidated and in need of major updates. "The total property was 11 units, and everyone got varying increases unless they had been there less than a year. A family with 6-year-old triplets was even forced out and relocated to Anaheim."

After McCrea was given the ultimatum by her landlord, Eric Kessler of West Hollywood, she texted him, complaining the increase was unfounded and unfair. "Can't raise rents after rent control passes," Kessler tersely responded via text message. "You are welcome to get a roommate and charge whatever you want to them."

McCrea moved out. She wasn't willing to share the apartment or put up with Kessler's antics, plus, she says, the increase was way more than market rate.

Butler: "The city isn't doing enough to protect its residents."

Off East Fourth Street and Redondo Avenue, Jeremy Rodriguez was served a 60-day notice to vacate in early November, when his one-year lease was up. Despite always paying his rent on time and never having been in trouble with his landlord, he was provided no reason for the eviction and offered no option to stay. Rodriguez, who manages a craft-beer tasting room in Long Beach, is now forced to find a new place for his child, girlfriend and small dog in the middle of the hectic holiday season.

After speaking with dozens of longtime renters throughout Long Beach, it's clear there is a sense of trepidation about their living situations, especially among those who fear they can't afford any type of rent increase, the costs associated with moving or a hefty deposit on a new place. Salaries have not kept up with rising inflation. "It's totally stressful to find out it's your home one day and not the next," says Rodriguez. "Thankfully, some friends who have a truck and a garage are helping us out so

we can slowly pack up and prepare to move. Everyone isn't so lucky."

Angel George, who grew up in Pittsburg and has lived in Long Beach for the past five years, says she might be an introvert, but she's no pushover, especially when she feels someone has been wronged.

Last June, George was served a 60-day notice to vacate her studio apartment in Long Beach's Wrigley Village, but she wasn't having it. The 12-unit building had been sold, and a new group of owners was planning to renovate the units and increase the rent. George pre-empted her eviction by paying her August rent online, which was erroneously accepted, forcing the building's property-management company, WestStar, to give her another 60 days. When she attempted to pay her September rent, it was immediately refunded, so she took matters into her own hands and organized six of her fellow tenants to go on "rent strike."

**Browne:** "We're in the midst of a housing catastrophe."

Her bold move was not without risk. George and her neighbors could have been served an Unlawful Detainer, which would have prompted a court hearing and likely resulted in their physical removal by the LA County Sheriff's Department. "I understand this is a business, but we are people," says George. "We weren't about to just let them steamroll us."

The rent strike made a bit of a splash in the local news, and soon after, the building's tenants were contacted by WestStar via email to set up a meeting to discuss their concerns.

That meeting, which took place in September, was attended by a representative of WestStar, its attorney and one of the building's owners, Nathan Levine-Heaney, who is a Los Angeles-based cinematographer, as well as the rent-striking tenants. "[Levine-Heaney] said he was unaware of all of these issues and it was not his intention to have it go this far," says George, who recalls telling them, "This could have been all avoided if you guys would have come to us when you first took over the building and said, 'Hey, this is what is going on, this is what the new rent prices are going to be. Can you guys do it; do you want to sign new leases?'"

Levine-Heaney and WestStar did not respond to requests to be interviewed.

For his part, George says, Levine-Heaney was receptive and helped to negotiate a solution for each of the striking residents. George agreed to move into another unit in the building and pay the increased rent in exchange for a two-year lease. Others were offered cash for keys to help them with relocation costs.

According to Butler, strikes such as the one organized by George are likely to become more frequent. "Desperate times call for desperate measures," he says, adding that rent strikes are of a more a cry for help than a real policy solution.

"Long Beach has a great opportunity to leverage the county's Measure H dollars, which are for wrap-around services for homelessness and homeless prevention. If Measure H was coupled with a local housing construction bond, it would create a powerful tool," says Browne. "In addition, private developers should be required to do their part to address the housing crisis with robust inclusionary-housing requirements, developer-impact fees and no-net-loss policies."

Garcia doesn't entirely agree. In a September interview with the *Long Beach Business Journal*, the mayor pondered, "Could a bond help us achieve [more affordable housing]? It could, but I think that bonds are complex, and they require two-thirds of the population to vote for them. That's a hard lift for Long Beach. I'm glad that that's not something anyone rushed into. I think that would have been a mistake."

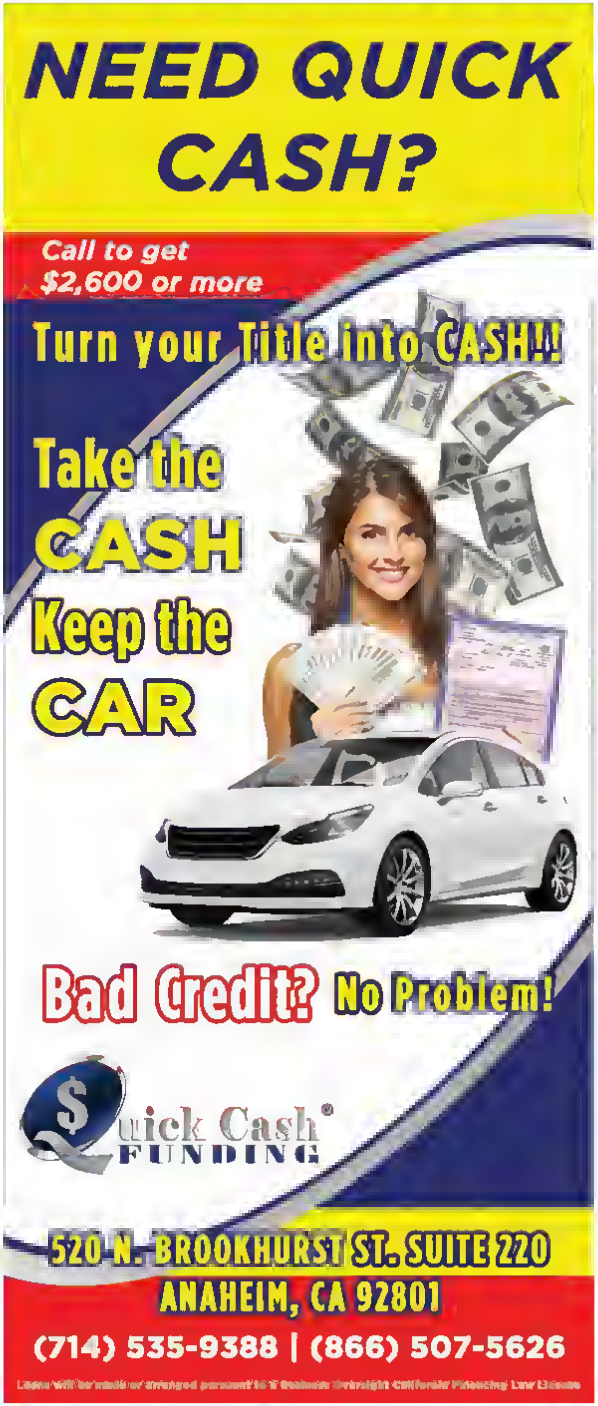
Even so, advocates believe rushing to fix Long Beach's housing crisis is exactly what needs to happen.

George looks back on her ordeal as an emotional roller coaster that is "not for the faint of heart." Nnoetheless, she says, the experience has transformed her. She doesn't intend to stop speaking out any time soon, even if few in city government are listening. Last month, George took her case before the City Council and pleaded for them to work on protecting renters such as herself. As George began telling her story, Garcia "got up and left," causing her to speculate, "Is that the kind of leadership Long Beach needs right now?"

That's a question Long Beach voters will likely address if Garcia runs for re-election in four years. In the meantime, however, advocates such as Browne and Butler and a growing number of fed-up residents will keep pushing for reforms, especially those that help to increase affordable-housing development in the city and protect them from out-of-control rents. The City Council continues to discuss renter-protection measures, but nothing formal has been announced.

"The crisis is changing the fabric of our city," says Browne. "We should be working to protect Long Beach's existing, long-term residents instead of trying to attract new ones with luxury developments."

**LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM**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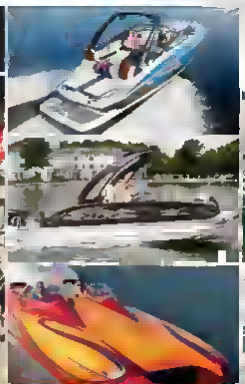

# *calendar

saturday›
A LOT OF HO, HO, HOS IN HERE

COURTESY OF OC SANTA CRAWL

## fri/12/14

[COMEDY]

### FUNNY BUSINESS

**Wanda Sykes**

Emmy Award winner (and seven-time nominee) Wanda Sykes is traveling across the country, trying out new material and offering fans a look at the comedy process. Sykes has only seen her stature and ticket sales increase after publicly coming out in 2008, becoming the first African-American woman, as well as the first LGBT person, to be the featured entertainer at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner in 2009. Her blunt and insightful comedy—a mixture of personal anecdotes of life with her chain-smoking French wife and their two white children, liberal politics, and common-sense observations of the absurd—has made her one of the most popular standups working today. Don't miss this rare chance to catch her at a small, local venue for a next-to-nothing price.

Wanda Sykes at the Brea Improv, 120 S. Brea Blvd., Brea, (714) 482-0700; improvcom/brea. 7:30 &9:45 p.m., also Sat. $35-$85. 18+. —SR DAVIES

[CONCERT]

### Musical Magic

**Tropa Magica**

Tonight's big show features four fearsome bands! Ex-Thee Commons-ers Tropa Magica have a Sandinista Clash-style charisma and knack for a catchy hook, as well as wide-ranging appetites that get them mixing punk and rock with chicha, cumbia, disco, dub and more, all delivered with an instantly distinctive Los Saucos-esque vocal *grrrowl*. Prettiest Eyes are pretty iconoclastic, too, with a powerful Suicide influence—synths, screams, and a charmingly brutal tendency to double-down and double-down again on a riff. (Crushworthy, in an industrial sense.) Traps PS are akin to the early Minutemen but heavier on the Watts, and High Curbs like to play with a few different sounds, but you'll find lots of '80s South Bay punk and Bomp! garage in there (although their recent *Tommy* EP pretty much tests out a guitar-rock vibe or two from every decade since '66—and keeps it together with a focused force of personality).

Tropa Magica, Prettiest Eyes, High Curbs and Traps PS at Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, alexsbarcom 8 p.m. $10-$12. 21+. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

## sat/12/15

[CONCERT]

### SULTRY SOUL

**The Internet**

More and more people are catching wise to the brilliance of Los Angeles' the Internet, purveyors of trip-hop-happy soul and R&B. Formed by Odd Future alums Syd and Matt Martians, the band smoothly blend electronic music with a formidable cast of instrumentalists that includes guitarist Steve Lacy. Their latest album, *Hive Mind*, is suffused with Syd's hot-buttered vocals and has garnered ever-more listeners and radio play thanks to the more danceable, funky singles "Come Over" and "La Di Da." At any Internet performance, you won't find an audience member in the room not melting from the group's tremendous musical seduction. See for yourself at tonight's appearance at the Observatory.

The Internet at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com. 8 p.m. $40-$85. All ages. —AIMEE MURILLO

[EVENTS]

### Here Comes Santa

**OC Santa Crawl**

Newport Beach is about to be overrun by a bunch of tipsy Saint Nicks walking the streets for booze as they partake in today's Santa Crawl. Deck yourself in your best Santa suit (or, if you want, Mrs. Claus ensemble) or Santa's Helper costume (the title of which includes an elf or reindeer), then head to Woody's Warf for the start to the fun, which will later continue at Avila's El Ranchito, American Junkie, the Blue Beet and more. Enjoy drink specials, DJs spinning at each stop, costume contests, and other games and prize giveaways. This holiday-centric bacchanalia benefits the Eli Home, a charity that aims to help survivors of child abuse.

MORE » ONLINE
OCWEEKLY.COM

The Seventh-Annual OC Santa Crawl starts at Woody's Wharf, 2318 Newport Blvd., Newport Beach; www.ocsantacrawl.com. 1 p.m. $10-$50. 21+. —AIMEE MURILLO

# sun/12/16

[FILM]

## Ciao, Bella

### *La Strada*

Museo Bowers invites you to meet Federico Fellini at his best in *La Strada* (*The Road*), the auteur's 1954 black-and-white psycho-biography of a childhood, culture and mythology. The Cinema Italiano series showing features legendary performances from the heartbreakingly beautiful Giulietta Masina as Gelsomina, the exploited, if redeemed, naïf; Anthony Quinn as Zampanò, the brutal he-man, and Richard Basehart as the doomed philosopher acrobat. Street performers and circus folk follow Fellini's whims and rebel against the puppetry of their character roles and the director's sadistic, sentimental fatalism. You will weep. You must!

*La Strada* at Bowers Museum, 2002 N. Main St., Santa Ana, (714) 567-3677, www.bowers.org. 2 p.m. $12

—ANDREW TONKOVICH

[EVENTS]

## Come, All Ye Faithful

### Beer & Carols

This week's edition of the popular, long-running Beer & Hymns event at the Wayfarer takes a merry approach as guests will partake in their favorite Christmas carols between swigs of refreshing, frosty beer. Soak in the warm atmosphere of the occasion and sing along with the official Beer & Hymns band, who will provide their usual arrangement of special, spiritual Americana and folk music, with a non-religious vibe that welcomes people of all faiths and church/non-church-going proclivities. Bring your pals and join the yuletide chorus of upbeat, enthusiastic caroling while enjoying uplifting brews.

Beer & Carols at the Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, wayfarercm.com. 7 p.m. $15-$30. 21+.

—AIMEE MURILLO

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# mon/12/17

[FILM]

## Santa Slays

### *Black Christmas*

If there's anything better than a good, ol'-fashioned, sorority-house slasher film, it's one that takes place during the holidays. Leave it to our friends at the Frida Cinema to trot out this classic. Starring Olivia Hussey, Keir Dullea, Margot Kidder and John Saxon, *Black Christmas* was the original holiday-season slasher film. It has everything: scary phone calls, creepy attics, a mysterious murderer and more! If you've never seen it—or if you want to see it larger-than-life—head to the Frida for this one-night-only showing!

*Black Christmas* at the Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Ste. 100, Santa Ana, (714) 285-9422, thefridacinema.org. 8 p.m. $7-$10. —SCOTT FEINBLATT

# tue/12/18

[KARAOKE]

## Season's Bleatings!

### Ugly Sweater Karaoke

Gotta love an excuse to wear an ugly Christmas sweater out on the town! Tonight's edition of karaoke night at the Copper Door invites attendees to get into the spirit of the season by wearing those god-awful yuletide pullovers as you belt out your favorite (or not-so-favorite) Christmas tunes. The restaurant's own Kevin Cable will emcee, as well as provide encouragement for those prone to stage fright, and the kitchen will offer up some delicious high-end bar food. If you need liquid courage, happy hour starts at 7 p.m. and runs until 10 p.m., giving you a chance to imbibe before it's your turn at the mic!

Ugly Sweater Christmas Karaoke Night at the Copper Door, 225 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, (714) 696-1479, thecopperdoorbar.com. 9 p.m. Free. 21+. —AIMEE MURILLO

# wed/12/19

[THEATER]

## BLESS US, EVERYONE!

### A Christmas Carol

For 39 years, South Coast Repertory has brought a faithful adaptation of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* to the stage, making it the quintessential production to see during the holiday season. Directed by John-David Keller and starring Hal Landon Jr. as Ebenezer Scrooge, this vision of 19th-century London will warm your heart with its timeless tale of unity and benevolence toward your fellow man. You know the story by now: A frugal and cruel businessman who loathes the holiday is visited on Christmas Eve by the ghost of his former business partner, who warns him of three ghosts who will visit him in the night. Each ghost provides a glimpse into how his life decisions have negatively affected him and those around him, deeply instilling in him the beauty of the season.

*A Christmas Carol* at South Coast Repertory, 650 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 708-5555, www.scr.org. 7:30 p.m. $68-$78. Not suitable for children younger than 6. —AIMEE MURILLO

[CONCERT]

## Beach Rats

### The Growlers

After a pretty despondent past few years, it's safe to say that 2018 has been kinder to the Growlers. The Dana Point band relaunched their Beach Goth festival and subsequent tour, plus they surprised fans by releasing an album full of leftover material from throughout the years, titled *Casual Acquaintances*. As for their triumphant return home, tonight's House of Blues show is among their last of the year, after spending a chunk of their time on the road. We heard the show is sold out, so if you've got tickets, expect the usual theatrical flair, for which the Growlers have become known.

The Growlers at the House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 Disney Way, Ste. 337, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim. 7 p.m. $39.50. All ages. —WYOMING REYNOLDS

# thu/12/20

[FILM]

## Come On In!

### *Pee-Wee's Playhouse Christmas Special*

The 1988 *Pee-Wee's Playhouse Christmas Special*, screening tonight at the Laguna Art Museum, was filmed at the height of Pee-Wee Herman's charm. Our silliest of red-bowtied heroes spends the holidays with era-appropriate icons such as Little Richard (Pee-Wee teaches him to ice skate, and we dare you to come up with a storyline more adorable than that), Magic Johnson, k.d. lang and even Charro. But it's not all Christmas cheer, as it turns out Pee-Wee's list for Santa is so long that St. Nick won't have enough gifts for all the other children of the world! Whatever will Pee-Wee do? Our guess is the right thing, naturally.

*Pee-Wee's Playhouse Christmas Special* at Laguna Art Museum, 307 Cliff Dr., Laguna Beach, (949) 494-8971, lagunaartmuseum.org. 7 p.m. $5-$7, children younger than 17, free. —ERIN DEWITT

[BURLESQUE]

## RATED XXX-MAS

### Twisted Christmas Burlesque

It's the weekend before Christmas, and at Harvelle's, the only creatures stirring are the stunning and talented ladies and gents of Dirty Little Secrets Burlesque, who will be hanging up some special stockings of their own. At this Twisted Christmas Burlesque, performers will strut their stuff onstage and unwrap the naughtier, sexier side of the holiday—among other things. From kissing by the mistletoe to playing reindeer games to sitting on Santa's lap, there's already so much kinky subtext to Christmas that the Dirty Little Secrets troupe can cheekily use in its overall sendup of the season. Come down for a delightfully sleazy show, filled with more decadent sweetness and surprises than a fruitcake.

Twisted Christmas Burlesque at Harvelle's Long Beach, 201 E. Broadway, Long Beach. (562) 239-3700, longbeachharvelles.com. 9 p.m. $10-$40. 21+. —AIMEE MURILLO


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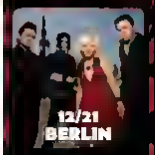

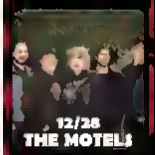

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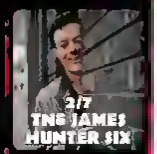
12/21 BERLIN
12/22 THE ENGLISH BEAT
12/23 AN EVENING WITH DAVID BENOIT: CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS
12/27 DONAVON FRANKENREITER
12/28 MARTHA DAVIS AND THE MOTELS
12/29 QUEEN NATION (QUEEN TRIBUTE)
12/31 BEATLES VS STONES - A MUSICAL SHOWDOWN
1/4 PONCHO SANCHEZ
1/5 THE CHAIRMAN AND THE BOARD (RAT PACK TRIBUTE)
1/11 TOMMY EMMANUEL WITH JOHN KNOWLES THE HEART SONGS TOUR
1/12 DESPERADO (EAGLES TRIBUTE)
1/16 BUCKCHERRY
1/17 THE MAGPIE SALUTE (RICH ROBINSON, MARC FORD, SVEN PIPIEN) / THE STONE FOXES
1/18 TOMMY CASTRO
1/18 ROBBY KRIEGER
1/23 ANA POPOVIC / VERY SPECIAL GUEST JOHNNY A.
1/24 MICHAEL NESMITH - AND THE HITS JUST KEEP ON COMIN'
1/25 BIG HEAD TODD & THE MONSTERS / THE MAIN SQUEEZE
1/28 JD SOUTHER
1/27 ANNA NALICK
2/1 THE TUBES
2/2 THE DAN BAND
2/7 THE JAMES HUNTER SIX
2/8 JOSHUA RADIN / CARY BROTHERS / LILY KERSHAW
2/10 THE SMITHEREENS WITH GUEST VOCALIST MARSHALL CRENSHAW
2/14 DITTMAR LIEBERT & LUNA NEGRA
2/18 THE PETTY BREAKERS (TOM PETTY TRIBUTE)
2/21 LARRY CARLTON



## UPCOMING SHOWS

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2/24 THE FOUR FRESHMEN
3/1 TINSLEY ELLIS / COCO MONTOYA
3/3 JUNIOR BROWN
3/10 THE SPINNERS
3/18 THE FENIANS
3/21 ULI JON ROTH: 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF ELECTRIC SUN AND TOKYO TAPES
3/22 SUPER DIAMOND
3/23 THE BLASTERS
3/24 MARK FARNER
3/28 AL STEWART
3/31 MORGAN JAMES: FROM WHITE TO BLUE, TWO ICONIC ALBUMS CELEBRATED
4/9 BUDDY GUY
4/18 AN EVENING WITH THE MUSICAL BOX
4/28 KEIKO MATSUI
5/18 THE 5TH DIMENSION
5/25 MUSIC LEGEND DICK DALE
5/30 LITTLE RIVER BAND
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MERCEDES DEL REAL

# Chicken Soup As It's Ramen to Be

## Kashiwa's rich chicken ramen competes with the best of the pork ones

BY EDWIN GOEI

When you first sip the rich, milky chicken broth at Kashiwa Ramen, you might think to yourself that the chef must have tasted the pork-based tonkotsu broth prevalent at all the other ramen shops in town and bet himself he could do the same thing with chicken. But the truth is there has always been this style of soup. It's called toripaitan, and in Japan—where the tonkotsu craze has leveled off—it's this chicken soup that has now bubbled to the top.

Paitan is simply a white broth, and here it's made from boiling the chicken bones vigorously at high temperatures until all of its gelatin, fats and goodness surrender into the soup. But at Kashiwa, the word *soup* seems an inadequate description. The viscosity is closer to hand lotion. Notice how it coats the spoon, how it doesn't so much pour as flow like hot candle wax. And as it sits exposed to cold air, you can see the surface start to congeal into film. You would be correct in guessing that if you refrigerate the leftovers, it will harden into a solid block.

Kashiwa's soup is so nourishing it should be classified as another food group. When you sip it lava-hot, all of its flavor molecules hit every taste receptor in your mouth as if it were a pinball machine. The umami levels are off the charts. More than anything, the soup has a concentrated chicken-ness. Slurping it is equivalent to chugging an undiluted red-and-white can of Campbell's chicken noodle. In fact, if you took a bowl of it and added an equal portion of boiling water, you will have created two bowls of a still very tasty soup.

If grandma's chicken soup is a cure-all, Kashiwa's is prescription strength. In fact, it may be too much for some people. At times, it can feel as though you're drinking straight turkey gravy. Though not overly salty, you need a glass of water a quarter of your way into it—if only to the reset your mouth for the rest.

In Costa Mesa, a town that has more ramen shops than any other in the county, Kashiwa is diametrically opposed to Kita-kata Ramen Ban Nai, which favors the light and clear style of broth called chintan. Whether someone will like one over the other is purely subjective. After all, even if you love pie, you will have your own opinions on which is better, apple or banana cream? The difference between the ramen styles is just as disparate.

But if you do favor these kinds of rich broths, ordering any add-ons to the soup at Kashiwa is unnecessary and a waste of money. The yolk of the soy sauce egg—here done properly such that it hovers at the oozy state between liquid and solid—is just about the last thing you'll need. As with slathering bacon with butter, it's overkill.

You could, by the way, opt for pork belly chashu as a topping, but the chicken chashu, which is merely slow-cooked chicken breast, is more apropos. Similar to how Chinese cooks prepare steamed chicken, Kashiwa's chicken tastes as the bird should—it's very poultry-forward, with nothing hidden behind breading or 11 herbs and spices.

When you order the ramen, about the only thing you are required to decide is whether you want the curly or the straight noodle. You're also asked to choose the texture level at which it's cooked. The curly noodle is indeed curly, but also tinted yellow. The straight noodle is somewhere between spaghetti and angel hair. Both are equally good, but you should always ask for the "medium" chewiness. At this stage, they're soft but still firm enough to spring back elastically when you bite into it.

These noodles, however, are secondary to Kashiwa's soup, of which there are actually three variants. There's a spicy one, a black garlic and a spicy black garlic. None of them is as good as the unadulterated original. The addition of black garlic merely masks the chicken flavor with a bitterness that doesn't cut down the richness. And if you want your soup spicy, you could just dribble the chile oil that's provided at the table for free.

The other table condiments, especially the vinegar, will come in handy for the gyoza, which are constructed into flat, rectangular parcels the size of a stick of Wrigley's gum. The shape allows these chicken and pork potstickers to be crisped on both sides in the pan. And if there's anything that can be improved on a gyoza, it's always the crispiness.

Another appetizer of crunchy-on-the-outside, juicy-on-the-inside chicken karaage is also excellent. It comes out in a tiny fry basket with two squirt bottle of sauces they don't need. It also serves as confirmation that when it comes to chicken, the kitchen staff at Kashiwa—one of whom you see continuously stirring a huge pot—are alchemists.

**KASHIWA RAMEN**

**1420 Baker St., Ste. C, Costa Mesa, (657) 232-0223, thekashiwaramen.com. Ramen, $10.50-$13.50, appetizers, $3-$5. Beer and wine.**

## WHAT THE ALE

» ROBERT FLORES

## Chihuahuas Welcome

At 1:30 p.m. on a recent Sunday, I find myself sitting in Newport Beach's newest beer spot, teacup Chihuahua puppy in one hand, Chihuahua Cervaza in the other, wondering, "What in the hell did I do in my life to end up here?"

Most new breweries you walk into, there are some stainless-steel fermentation vessels, perhaps a few kegs, and maybe a frothy bucket or two. At Chihuahua there's none of that. Instead, there's a menu filled with tacos, a salsa bar, various agua frescas and a self-service beer wall. The food mostly goes for less than $5. And while chihuahuas are welcome indoors, larger doggos should stick to the patio.

On offer are Mexican-style lagers of various strengths and shades of brown. The lineup of El Primero, Rico, Rosado and Negro is clean and crisp, yet none really shines when poured into the plastic cups provided. The beers are contract-brewed in Buellton at Figueroa Mountain, which has gotten accolades for various lagers over the years.

Over time, most self-pouring draft systems develop into a shitshow of dirty lines, gross tap handles and weird thermodynamics without water pre-rinsing. However, during the first week Chihuahua was open, the system was on point. But if a place has dedicated employees guarding a self-serve draft wall, why not have them pour my beer? Self-checkout sucks, and self-pouring is a novelty nobody asked for. At least the beers are $5.

If you want beer to go, the odd clear bottle choice leaves your ale susceptible to being light struck, causing unwanted skunk aromatics before you get a chance to take the first sip. Just as Gramps said: "When in doubt, make sure to double-bag it."

**CHIHUAHUA CERVEZA**

**3107 Newport Blvd., Newport Beach, (949) 771-8226, chihuahuacerveza.com.**

GREG NABEL

ERIN DEWITT

# Promenade Hit

## The Harbor has serious game

LONG BEACH LUNCH
» ERIN DEWITT

"It was a full-on labor of love. We came in with sledgehammers swinging," says the Harbor's Andrew Krajacic of the venue's extensive remodel. Located on the First Street block of Pine Avenue, that prime spot, which Andrew now co-owns with his brother Chris Krajacic, had been a revolving door of dining concepts, it was gastropub/nightclub Moonshiners, a Le Creperie, and even a Hooters at one point.

But the Harbor, which opened over the summer, fits into the prospering Downtown Promenade quite comfortably. It's a vast space—6,650 square feet, to be exact—and feels as much a game hall as a restaurant and bar. There are communal tables throughout, a cozy living room area near the entrance and games aplenty. You'll find shuffleboard on the patio, giant Uno cards on one table and a retro Pac-Man arcade game by the bar. Pool tables, dart boards and honest-to-god Skee-ball alleys are in the back, each adorned with the Harbor logo. And all the games are free of charge for patrons. "It's not just sitting around, drinking," says Chris. "We wanted Harbor to be a social environment—someplace you could go on a date, play each other at pool instead of the usual string of questions."

Games aside, where the Harbor shows up the previous tenants of 130 Pine Avenue is in its menus. Chef Andy Taylor calls his cuisine craft American. "something approachable, but with a twist." His creations include the Hickory Lacquered Chicken Nugs, a plate of veggies and chicken bites coated in a smoky glaze, then drizzled with mustard sauce, aged white Cheddar and cilantro.

The thick, grilled three-cheese sandwich is also stuffed with tri-tip and served with a sweet tomato soup for dipping. The top-selling white clams come out as a beautifully arranged bowl of huge and buttery mollusks, kale, garlicky white beans and bacon with a fanned-out array of savory toasts.

Currently, the Harbor offers brunch from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the weekends. Dinner is served after 4 p.m. on weekdays, as well as all day on weekends. After the New Year, the company plans to expand its food service to include weekday lunch hours.

That brunch, though. Massive vanilla-buttermilk pancakes are stacked high and topped with a spiced peach-blueberry compote. The Harbor Benny is an eggs Benedict topped with chunky matchsticks of braised bacon and a handful of tatsoi greens, all smothered in jalapeño hollandaise sauce. The blueberry-gin-cured lox comes piled over a fresh bagel with cream cheese, sea beans and citrus-pickled red onions.

Displaying hundreds of liquor bottles, the massive bar is managed by David Schmidt, a mixologist heralding from New York, where he worked under Iron Chef Marc Forgione. There is nothing precious on the Harbor's cocktail list; a Coke can with the top lopped off is used to hold a strong whiskey cocktail. There's a tequila drink that is unapologetically blue. Sure, there are coupe cocktails adorned with herbal sprigs, but there's a confidence to these drinks that's rarely seen in other art-cocktail joints.

Although the Harbor stands squarely between craft-cocktail/hipster-menu stewards the Federal and Bo-Beau Kitchen + Roof Tap, this rookie may just have them beat—or at least up for a little friendly competition.

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DARIN MEYER

# Season's Greetings

## Farmhouse at Roger's Gardens goes winter

There are some tough tables to get during the holidays, but I had no idea how valuable my reservation was until I arrived at Farmhouse at Roger's Gardens at 5 p.m. on a Wednesday. The current wait? Only 100 minutes with a completely full bar. The al fresco eatery, covered in patio umbrellas and propane heat lamps, is warmly lit with twinkle lights reflecting on hundreds of wine glasses. In the soft afterglow of Corona del Mar's golden hour, it's commonplace for diners to snap selfies tableside.

As I strolled past the bar and kitchen, a familiar face caught my eye. Koire Rogers, previously of Arc Food & Libations and Cucina Enoteca, was training on the line. Koire is the creator of one of my favorite drinks of all time: Coffee and Cigarettes, a drink with rye whiskey, smoke and a kiss of coffee beans. Just when I thought one of Orange County's best bar programs couldn't get any better, the addition of Koire at Farmhouse solidifies that.

As the menu changes hyper-seasonally, so does the bar. Anthony Laborin, head of cocktail R & D, is constantly crafting new whims, the current cocktail involves a classy fundraiser for the devastating Northern California fires, which affected several of the purveyors from which Farmhouse sources its ingredients. Served in a classic coupe, the drink smells like petrichor in a citrus grove. The whim is built on freshness with grapefruit cordial, citrus simple syrup and a 4-year-old rum. Drinking for charity? Yes, please!

I heard Farmhouse's veggie bowl can add years to your life, and considering my booze consumption, I'm probably breaking even. "Did you ever hear of that S.O.S. taco event?" asks owner and executive chef Rich Mead. "Everyone was doing big, meaty-greasy tacos, and we decided to go veggie, and I did this cauliflower-tortilla thing with a purée of sweet potato, other fresh ingredients with pickled vegetables."

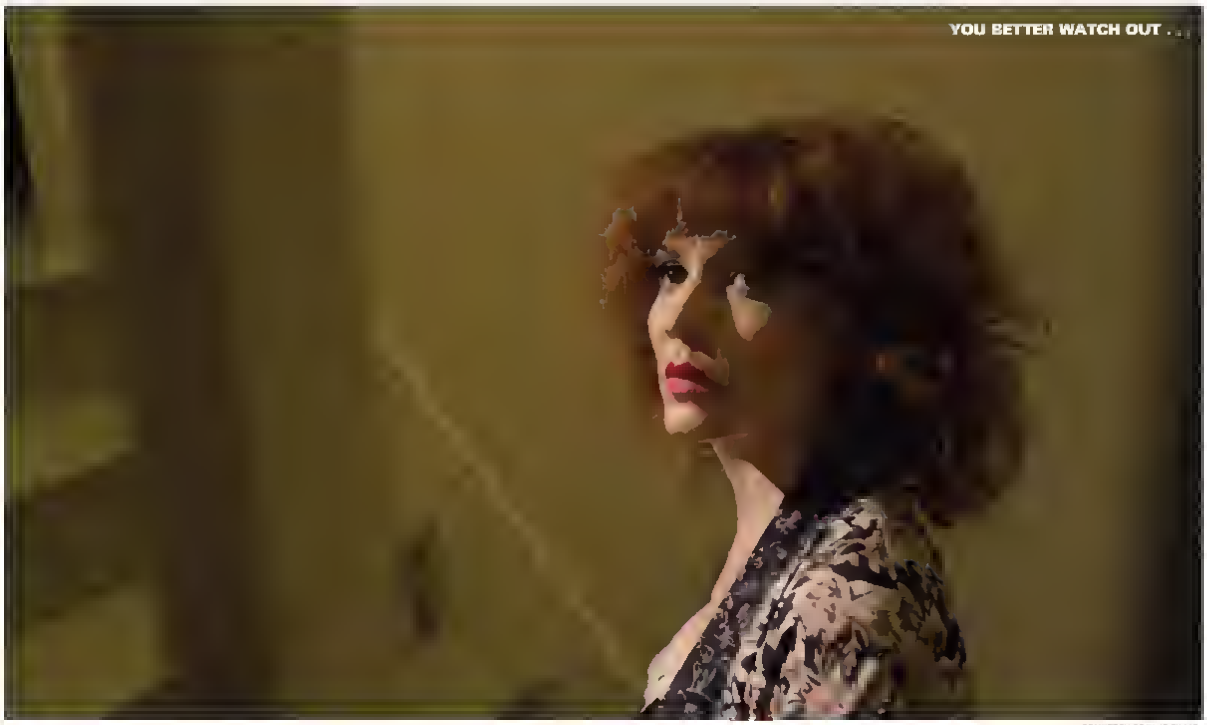
This dish is a variation of that." It has blistered guajillo-glazed Brussels sprouts, cipollini onions and persimmon-pomegranate relish. All of these ingredients combine to make something so fresh, warm and perfectly snug in the toothy tortillas that I feel like I'm a kid who's being tricked into eating healthy.

Slicing into the grilled dijon-soy-glazed pork tenderloin, the cool evening air forces the blanket resting on the back of my chair across my lap. The steamy Parmesan potato cakes, vibrant braised red cabbage, and warm apple-raisin compote drizzled in Apple Jack brandy sauce is layered, heartwarming and so damn fresh. The only bad part? I need to make reservations to try it all again.

## Eat & Drink This Now

» GREG NAGEL

**FARMHOUSE AT ROGER'S GARDENS**
**2301 San Joaquin Hills Rd., Corona Del Mar**
**(949) 640-1415, farmhouserg.com**




COURTESY OF RLJE FILMS

# Nightmares Before Christmas

*All the Creatures Were Stirring* and *Slay Belles* are two strange new Christmas movies to battle the holiday blues

BY AIMEE MURILLO

Christmas horror is its own strange subgenre that surprisingly has spun off in multitudes of independent, direct-to-video or hardly-seen films in the past few decades. Much of the subject matter is pretty much the same, with a garden variety of murderers taking the form of Santa Claus (he's not scary enough on his own, apparently) In comparison, a holiday spent with dreaded in-laws would be a breeze.

Released this month on VOD are the horror-comedy anthology *All the Creatures Were Stirring* and *Slay Belles*. The former, directed by Rebekah and David Ian McKendry, features multiple scary stories taking place on or around Christmas. It begins with two old friends who meet up on Christmas Eve to see a mysterious stage production that tells different horrifying holiday tales. With a bizarre host flipping cryptic intertitles on cue cards, a silent trio of players do interpretive dance moves that spin into each story: an office secret-Santa party gone awry, with deadly gifts and incriminating evidence that each employee must take turns in opening, lest they all die; a husband trying to get home in time for Christmas dinner, but instead gets caught in a demonic curse; a Scrooge-like yuppie who encounters three frightful ghosts who make him change his ways; a murdered reindeer looking for revenge on the man who hit him with his car; a group of body-snatching aliens masquerading as friends invited over for Christmas dinner.

The film's theater sequences carry a Lynchian vibe, but in a parodic sense. If you're expecting a truly scary film, you'll be disappointed, but even in each one's short run time, its story is individually a little funny but also conceptually creative. Unfortunately, the creepy tales seem a bit anti-climactic. I'm sure it's hard to craft a fully horrifying and developed storyline for each vignette within a limited amount of time, but many of the stories have little to no resolution or are too easily wrapped up, almost as if they're filler sequences. That said, the sequence with the Scrooge-like yuppie contained the most well-developed narrative and character.

What this film does have going for it is its ensemble cast. In addition to *Crazy Rich Asians* star Constance Wu, the cast includes Amanda Fuller, Matt Long, Jonathan Kite, Mark Kelly, Megan Duffy, Stephanie Drake, Ashley Clements, Diva Zappa and Brea Grant. It's extremely well-acted and enjoyable to see the talent play their roles with a pinch of campiness, and they all work well within the limited length of their material.

Directed by Sponky Dan Walker (and really, when you encounter a filmmaker with a name like that, you already know what you're getting), *Slay Belles* takes place in the woods, where three women cosplayers explore a secluded cabin for video content and unwittingly release the spirit of Krampus on the world. They get help from Santa Claus (played by *Rocky Horror Picture Show* veteran Barry Bostwick) to stop the malevolent goat-demon from wreaking havoc on Christmas.

This isn't Walker's first film using Krampus, but here, he brings together the holy trio of Krampus, Santa Claus and ass-kicking women. Right off the bat, this film tells you it's a campy, tongue-in-cheek addition to the B-grade Christmas-horror genre. That, however, is its strength. The Krampus monster is an impressive, made-up monster and not a CGI creation, and Bostwick's Santa is inexplicably dressed like a biker, with a full-on bandana around his white locks, a vest, and a gold crucifix on a gold chain around his neck. I especially loved that each heroine—played by Kristina Kleve, Susan Slaughter and Hannah Wagner—owned her line delivery and smutty sexiness with a knowing wink. Bostwick is also great; the inclusion of the veteran actor in this schlocky picture doesn't seem strange or out of place at all.

These films both remind me of how prevalent Christmas-horror movies have become, and in the ensuing years, as the genre continues to take off, I only hope they can be even sillier, scarier and more creative—limited production budgets be damned!

AMURILLO@OCWEEKLY.COM

JOEL BEERS

# Crushing the Creche Scene

## As usual, Christmas in Brea is a festival of lights

BY JOEL BEERS

It's a Sunday night in December, and as I do most nights, I am walking the streets of Brea, peering into homes. But for once, I'm not alone. There are scores of other people crammed into this small neighborhood just east of the Kramer-Birch intersection, and there are at least that many cars inching their way at a funereal pace through the area.

It's Eagle Hills' 35-year-old tradition of going whole hog on Christmas decorations, with scores of homes on the cul-de-sacs and main drag of Starflower Street outfitted with extravagant light and inflatable displays. And while most are light on subtlety and yuge on overblown excess, and while it's tempting for those of us who harbor an inner Grinch to scoff at ostentatious displays and decorations during the holidays as the purview of people with ample disposable income, lots of time on their hands, and some kind of need to express themselves in often over-the-top and, occasionally, very strange ways, there's something else going on.

For amid the lights draped across lawns and atop rooftops, dangling from eaves and any tree, bush or surface that can sustain them, the panoply of inflatable Santas, snowmen, penguins, polar bears and Snoopys, the life-sized nativity scenes, the Chewbaccas and Mickey Mouses, something begins intruding on the sense that all of this is just neighbors trying to one-up one another in some zeal to get the most oohs and ahhs.

There is legitimate theater going on here. Every home is its own stage, and each one has some kind of story to tell; some are subtler and even tasteful, with simple, white, cardboard silhouettes of the people and animals at the manger gracing one lawn. Others are just bizarre, such as a collection of demented-looking elves anchored in place who appear to be working overtime to get gifts out, all doing so in front of one polar bear that looks as if it's genuflecting to another, which holds a gift.

Maybe it even approaches folk art, although that is stretching the term as these displays traffic so much in commercialism and consumerism (these decorations ain't cheap, with Disney and Peanuts characters giving Santa a run for his money; and while the real reason for the season signs and baby Jesuses in the manger are present, they are obscured by the glitz). But it's undeniable that many of the homes demonstrate a great deal of creativity—hell, even artistry.

Whatever it is, or isn't, the biggest trip is no one is making a dime. According to the website Brea Old and New (www.breaoldandnew.com), which is either affiliated with the city or administered by people who really, really love the place, this all started in 1981 when a small group of neighbors began decorating their homes, and it has grown into the current electric carnival, with at least 100 homes joining in and about 40 going all-in.

John McQuade, one of the original decorators, is named in one story on the site as a "ringleader," but he is quoted saying there is no neighborhood committee or meetings, and other neighbors say cooperation, not competition, is the bag, as many help one another set up displays. That sense of community extends outward to the people who flock to the neighborhood, though I didn't see it, apparently some homeowners open the interior of their homes to visitors to see more decorations, and plenty of residents were on-hand greeting passersby.

But other than traffic signs on Birch that tell viewers no unauthorized vehicles are allowed (something that obviously doesn't stick, as there were hundreds of cars limping along), there is no Big Brother with his controlling paws in the mix. And other than a small group of kids selling bottled water for $1 and Santa hats for $3, no one is hawking anything but good, old-fashioned holiday goodwill and cheer, albeit by spending a great deal of time and money (the inflatables range from $20 to $200, and one home had at least 15 of them piled against one another).

Now, the traffic and pedestrians have to be a goddamn nightmare for those few residents who don't join in. But I can't help thinking at least one non-participant effectively got his or her message across. One corner house had no twinkling Christmas lights or inflatables. In fact, the only thing illuminated was a small part of the lawn, which is all native landscaping.

Yeah, it all gets a bit much, as one display tends to melt into other. But in a day and age of surveillance cameras, suspicion and paranoia, the residents of this neighborhood have no problem inviting countless strangers to check out their homes, without a cop in sight or a ticket to buy.

And I'm sure it's all worth it. At least until that next SCE bill comes in.

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

*The Eagle Hills neighborhood is located off Starflower Street and Primrose Avenue, Brea. Lights go on at sundown (duh) every night through Dec. 29. Free.*

## ARTSOVERLOAD

» AIMEE MURILLO

### Dec. 14-20

***ANNIE*:** The beloved Tony Award-winning musical about a lovable young orphan who yearns to find a home. Fri., 7p.m.; Sat. Sun., 2 p.m. Through Dec. 22. $12.50-$35. No Square Theater, 384 Legion St., Laguna Beach. (949) 715-1333. www.nosquare.org.

**MEDIEVAL YULE CELEBRATION.** An afternoon filled with crafting activities, music, games and traditional festivities. Sat., 11 a.m. Free with Kidsenm admission ($2-$10; children younger than 3, free). Bowers Kidseum, 1802 N. Main St., Santa Ana. (714) 480-1520. www.bowers.org.

**RIDE OF LIGHTS.** The communal bike ride along a 10-mile loop features local food spots. Lights are required for all participating bikes. Sat., 6 p.m. Free (not including food). The Bicycle Tree, 702 W. 17th St., Ste. C, Santa Ana. (714) 760-4681. thebicycletree.org.

**UGLY SWEATER HOWL-IDAY PARTY.** Organized by CUDDLY, a charity benefiting multiple animal-rescue programs, pet owners are invited to bring their pups and dress in their favorite (or worst) ugly sweaters for a chance to win a prize. Tues., 7 p.m. Free admission with RSVP; beer sold separately. 21+. The Good Beer Co., 309 W. Fourth St., Santa Ana. (714) 714-2985. www.thegoodbeerco.com.

**HOLIDAY FOLLIES.** A special dinner cabaret featuring some of the most memorable holiday classics. Thurs. & Fri. Sun., 5 p.m. Through Dec. 22. $80. *The Queen Mary*, 1126 Queens Hwy., Long Beach. (877) 342-0738. www.queenmary.com.

**FREE SALON LECTURE: THE HISTORICAL JESUS.** Dr. James Rietveld discusses the latest research developments about Jesus Christ, as well as how this new information shapes the identity of one of the most important figures in history. Wed., 6 p.m. Free. Ipso Facto, 517 N. Harbor Blvd., Fullerton. (714) 525-7865. ipso-facto.com.

**"PORTFOLIO SERIES: CECILIA PAREDES".** The Peruvian artist uses photography to examine cultural integration and the ways non-native Americans are conditioned to "blend in" within a dominant culture. Open Wed.-Sun., 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Through Jan. 6, 2019. $7; $10; members and children younger than 12, free. Museum of Latin American Art, 628 Alamitos Ave., Long Beach. (562) 437-1689. www.molaa.org.

**"THE BEAUTY OF HOLLAND AND MAGNIFICENCE OF SPAIN".** Students from Laguna College of Art + Design's summer abroad program present paintings inspired by their experiences studying the art and architecture of the aforementioned European countries. Open Wed.-Sun., 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Through Jan. 23. Free. LCAD Gallery, 374 Ocean Ave., Laguna Beach. (949) 376-6000. www.lcad.edu.

# OC WEEKLY Bulletin

Feature your photo here!
Submit to ocweekly@ocweekly.com

## Upcoming Events

**Rollin' Creamery**
**GRAND OPENING!**
Saturday, December 15, 2018 at 6PM
9938 Bolsa Ave #117
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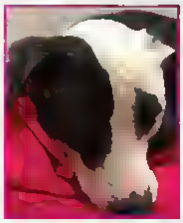
First 25 will receive FREE ICE CREAM &
first 100 will receive a FREE DRINK
Merch & giveaways throughout the night!

## Messages



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## Featured This Week

**thewell_restaurent** Taco Tuesday or Taco Burger Tuesday? We'll let you decide. Our "Let's Taco 'Bout It" Burger is going strong and we are hearing great things about it! Don't miss out! Cheers

**Tag us at #OCWeakly for a chance to be featured!**


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# Turn Up the Underground

## Rolling Loud festival discovers and defines hip-hop's future

BY NICK NUK'EM

Rolling Loud founders Tarif Cherif and Matt Zingler specialize in fortune telling. They have placed several bets on artists dating back to their days as concert promoters in Florida, and it's mostly paid off in major ways, especially considering their hip-hop festival is now the largest in the world.

The two met after Cherif moved to Florida in the fourth grade, and they maintained that relationship over the years, even while Cherif momentarily attended Florida State University before dropping out to raise a child and Zingler was 150 miles south at the University of Florida, Gainesville. "We always bonded over business, to be honest. Working on projects—whether it was throwing a party or pulling some type of moves in college, college-kid stuff," Cherif says.

The pair kicked off their journey in 2010 during a time when hip-hop music and culture blazed through the internet and social-media communities, with writers aggregating tastes in a way hardly explored before. Cherif found himself obsessing over the then-new crop of emcees including Big Sean, Wale and Curren$y—members of the 2009-'10 XXL freshman classes and dominators of website front pages during blogging's heyday. Each of these artists shares a cult following that can be traced back to his or her proliferation around the web and university campuses nearly a decade ago, when the rappers could be booked for college shows.

"When we were in college, there were promoters who were college kids that were getting some money together and booking an EDM DJ and a local nightclub and selling the tickets. Seemed like simple science, but nobody was doing it with my favorite rappers at the time," says Cherif.

There an opportunity for Cherif and Zingler to make money, but more important, Cherif saw throwing hip-hop shows as a chance to accomplish his goal of working in the music biz. He thought, "Okay, that's what I'm gonna do, and eventually, if I keep doing that, I'll be doing business with the people that are in the industry I want to be in. I'll be in that industry, and I'll figure out other stuff."

Cherif's initial venture into the music world now occupies most of his time. During our interview, he made it clear there are still acts being added to this weekend's Rolling Loud. Though he can't be found on the official lineup announcement, hot young LA rapper Blueface will take the stage. Confirming the "Deadlocs" rapper as part of the festival is just another step toward perfecting the process and making sure the pulse of the respective Rolling Loud host city is felt by the attendees, which can mean checking Twitter mentions to see what they may have missed.

CHERIF AND ZINGLER: ROLLIN' WITH THE HOMIES

JERRY CARNATION

"It's not as important to put the hometown hero in the show as it to put [in the lineup] the hometown underdog that's on the come-up," Cherif says.

Cherif, Zingler and their supporting cast pore over details such as the art installations and guiding concertgoers around the venue in the most efficient way they can. For this iteration of Rolling Loud, the crowd will be allowed to walk through the stadium in which the event is held to help facilitate flow and crowd control. Also, this year will include a useable basketball court on the Exposition Park and Banc of California Stadium grounds. Plus, a new set of delay screens equipped with extra knock will stretch more than halfway into the crowd, allowing latecomers a feeling of unity with those in the pit.

That community feeling is what Cherif thinks separates Rolling Loud from any other current live experience. "If I'm a fan, what I'm trying to experience at Rolling Loud is some super-lit mosh pits or big vibing to the music," he says. "Just imagine 50,000 people all singing or rapping to your favorite song, jumping to the beat. That energy is undeniable. It's like everybody on your playlist, but it's not just them performing—because everybody there listens to your same playlist. So it's a bunch of people just like you who you never met before, all on the same wavelength."

Among the names performing at LA's Rolling Loud this year are Post Malone and Cardi, who are almost guaranteed to be nominated for Grammy Awards this year. Other rappers tearing down the stage include Juice WRLD, Gunna and Blocboy JB, whose smash hits in 2018 have brought them millions of streams and heaps of attention.

Previous festivals have put in front of fans mega rappers such as N.E.R.D, Migos, Rae Sremmurd, Travis Scott and Kendrick Lamar, whom Cherif and Zingler booked in a 1,500-capacity venue in their home state around the *good kid, m.a.a.d city* era. They only sold 800 tickets. "I knew what I was dealing with," Cherif recalls. "This guy is a top-tier [artist] who will be mentioned in the same sentence as Lil Wayne and Tupac. So I knew that back in 2012."

That kind of artist growth is something the festival banks on. Cherif called it the "story of the festival."

"What we hope—and what we've seen happen with other artists—is they'll be on those last few lines [of the announcement] one year and put in a bunch of work and have music take off. Then, next year, they go up a couple of lines. That has happened multiple times, and it's the coolest thing," he says.

The event has exploded into the zeitgeist alongside hip-hop, which in recent years has become the biggest music genre in the world. And in January, Rolling Loud will go international for the first time with a showing in Australia.

**ROLLING LOUD LOS ANGELES**
featuring Post Malone, Lil Wayne, Cardi B, Lil Uzi Vert and more, at the Banc of California Stadium Grounds and Exposition Park, 3939 S. Figueroa St., Los Angeles, www.rollingloud.com/losangeles. Fri.-Sat., noon. $249-$449. All ages.

COURTESY OF JOHNNY AND JAALENE

# Teen Angels

## Johnny and Jaalene are a match made in rockabilly heaven

BY WYOMING REYNOLDS

For many people, church is a place to celebrate religion and all of the things that come with it. When you think of music that comes from a place of worship, rockabilly is likely far down on your list. Yet, this is how local duo Johnny and Jaalene met, and theirs is a sound of which the Lord would approve.

Though only 19, Johnny Ramos has a pedigree that would make many musicians jealous. His father is local blues legend Kid Ramos, and the younger Ramos is just as talented as his old man. After his father was diagnosed with cancer when he was 14, Ramos picked his guitar more intently and got into punk music.

As for his counterpart, 16-year-old Jaalene Deleon has been singing in the church choir for years. It was Kid Ramos who introduced her to rockabilly and suggested the two youngsters join forces and form a band in 2017. "We'd been going to the same church together for almost 10 years—since 2009," Deleon says. "We didn't talk, but our parents have known each other for a long time, longer than we've been in church together. Johnny's parents said that I should come sing with him. It started off with me singing for his birthday, and after that, we created a band and an album."

Johnny Ramos adds, "She's a great singer, and we ended up connecting with each other musically. It's been really cool since then."

Their self-titled album, released in September on Rip Cat Records, features appearances from Kid Ramos (who is also on the label), Tommy Harkenrider of Memphis Kings and Social Distortion bassist Brent Harding. "I would have been shocked if someone told me a year ago that [I'm] going to do an album and the bassist from Social Distortion is going to be on it," Ramos says. "We didn't really know what was going to happen, we just started playing and didn't have any plans."

Johnny and Jaalene performed in front of thousands of people as part of the We Give Thanks event on Thanksgiving outside the Honda Center, and they are slated to star in *Journey to Christmas*, a play put on by Musical Theatre Orange County. They will be playing Joseph and Mary, respectively.

But Johnny and Jaalene aren't ready to rest behind their dazzling debut. They are beginning to work on their second album, and "we'd love to go on tour," Deleon says. "We want to get around and play for people."

"We want to spread and make art," Ramos says. "We want to do and make what we want and make it different and interesting from whatever is out in the world. And, of course, have fun."

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# concert guide»

MASON POOLE

## Friday

**CBGB 45TH ANNIVERSARY BASH** featuring Blondie, Ramones, Joan Jett and Talking Heads cover sets. 7:30 p.m., $5. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com

**CHUUTA VINYL CLUB**. 11 p.m., free. 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com.

**EMO NIGHT BROOKLYN**. 8 p.m., $10-$12, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com

**TERMINALLY ILL, DOWNTOWN BROWN, SKULL DRUG, THE HAJJ, SEAN HART**. 8 p.m., free. 21+. Canyon Ten, 5821 Fairlynn Blvd., Yorba Linda, (714) 779-0880; www.canyontenportsbar.com.

**TROPA MAGICA, PRETTIEST EYES, THE HIGH CURBS, TRAPS PS**. 8 p.m., $10-$12, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292; www.alexsbar.com

## Saturday

**ATTITUDE: AN '80S NIGHT**. 8 p.m. free. 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292; www.alexsbar.com.

**GETHEN JENKINS, TED Z AND THE WRANGLERS, ANNIE MCDUEEN**. 8 p.m., $10, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com

**THE INTERNET**. 8 p.m., $40-$85, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com

**LA SANTA CECILIA**. 9 p.m., $25. 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com.

## Sunday

**DEAD BABIES, FISTFIGHT ON ECSTACY, NNN; UPPER DOWNER**. 8 p.m., $5. 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292; www.alexsbar.com.

**EL VEZ**. 8 p.m., $15. 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com.

## Monday

**ANUHEA**. 9 p.m., $25. 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com.

**BOBBY BLUNDERS**. 7 p.m., free. 21+. 4th St. Vine, 2142 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 343-5463; 4thstreetvine.com.

**CORDOVAS: JERRY AND THE REST**. 8 p.m. free. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com.

## Tuesday

**DANCE DANCE RESOLUTION: AN ELECTRONIC DANCE PARTY**. 8 p.m., free. 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com.

**H.E.R.**. 8 p.m., $50-$125, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com

**SAVING ABEL**. 7 p.m., $15, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

## Wednesday

**THE GROWLERS**. 7 p.m., $38.50, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

**THE HURRICANES, 3LH, THE GNARS, JOY NOISE, VALLEY BATS**. 9 p.m., free, 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com

**THUNDERCAT**. 8 p.m., $30-$35, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com.

## Thursday, Dec. 20

**BANE'S WORLD**. 8 p.m., $20, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com.

**FIFTH ANNUAL CALIFORNIA COUNTRY CHRISTMAS**. 8:30 p.m. $15. all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

**THE GMRC, GOLDEN BAM, MAMMOTH THUNDERPOWER**. 8 p.m., $5. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com.

**PILEUP, CHASE PETRA, GRACIE GREY, CROWN SHYNESS**. 8 p.m., $5. 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292; www.alexsbar.com

**REDD KROSS**. 8 p.m., $15. 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com

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# Slight Christmas

**Straight and married, but not boring, and heading to my parents' house for our first family Christmas since my asshole MAGA brother "stumbled over" the Tumblr blog on which the wife and I posted about our sexual adventures. (Pics of MMF threesomes and cross-dressing/pegging sessions, plus some dirty "true enough" stories.) My brother has always been an angry screwup, so he leapt on the chance to make me look bad by sending the link to my parents, siblings and even some close family friends. Our Tumblr blog is still up because we aren't ashamed. Any advice?**
***Totally Uncool Malicious Bastard's Lame Reveal***

Your Tumblr blog isn't going to be up for much longer TUMBLR, as the company that owns Tumblr—Verizon—is ashamed of your blog and the millions of others like it. Tumblr announced last week that all "adult" content is banned as of Dec. 17. And the definition of "adult content" is pretty broad: "photos, videos and GIFs of human genitalia, female-presenting nipples, and any media involving sex acts, including illustrations," although they will allow genitals and those wicked "female-presenting nipples" in images of classical art. (No contemporary junk or lady nips allowed.)

This is not just a blow to people who use Tumblr for porn—and that's most people who use Tumblr—but also to the sex-work community. Sex workers had already been driven off most other online platforms by anti-sex-work crusaders, and now sex workers are being driven off Tumblr as well. Forcing sex workers off the internet won't end sex work, the stated goal of anti-sex-work crusaders, but it will make sex work more dangerous—which tells us everything we need to know about the motives of anti-sex-work crusaders. While they claim to oppose sex work because it's dangerous, they push policies that make sex work more dangerous. Sex workers weren't just advertising online; they were *organizing*—in addition to honing and making the political argument for decriminalizing sex work, they were screening potential clients and sharing information with one another about dangerous clients. Just like anti-choice/anti-abortion crusaders, anti-sex-work crusaders don't want to "protect" women, they want to punish women for making choices of which they disapprove. (As a general rule. If what you're doing makes people less safe, you don't get to claim you're trying to protect anyone—it's like claiming you only set houses on fire to drive home the importance of smoke alarms.)

Anyway: fuck your sex-shaming/smut-shaming brother, TUMBLR. As for the rest of your family, you and the wife should slap smiles on your faces and act as if you've done nothing wrong—because you haven't done anything wrong. Your asshole brother is the bad guy, and any family members who wish to discuss how offended they were by your Tumblr blog should be directed to speak with your brother, as he's the one who showed it to them.

**How can I explain to my sisters that although I'm a free sexual woman, I still prefer men as sexual partners? My sisters are both involved with women, and they cannot understand how, with all the awful sexual inequality in the world, I can still be primarily attracted to men. Sometimes I even imagine my sexuality as a guy into a sexuality in a woman's body, and I try to explain it to them in this way. I'm not a secret right-winger or someone kidding around by asking this question. This is a real issue.**
***Give It To Me Straight***

**P.S. I have a straight male friend who says he's a lesbian trapped in a man's body. What do you think of this?**

People don't choose to be straight—some poor motherfuckers are born that way—any more than hetero-romantic bisexuals choose to be hetero-romantic bisexuals. You can't help who you're attracted to, GITMS, primarily or otherwise, and the contempt of family members can't change a person's sexual or romantic orientation. Your sisters should understand that, since they most likely wouldn't be with women if the contempt of family members had that kind of power.

As for describing yourself as a guy man trapped in a woman's body and your straight male friend describing himself as a lesbian trapped in a man's body — unless the two of you are trans—in which case, you could be homos trapped in the wrong bodies—your friend is just another straight guy mortified by the mess straight people (mostly white, mostly men) have made of the world. You're also mortified by straightiness GITMS, or at least the sexual inequality that often comes bundled with it. But instead of your straight male friend opting out of heterosexuality (which he can't do) or you framing your attraction to men as a gay thing to get your sisters off your back (which you shouldn't have to do), your friend should identify as straight (because he is) and you should identify as someone who doesn't give a shit what her sisters think (because you shouldn't).

If good straight guys and "free sexual women" in opposite-sex relationships don't identify with hetero-sexuality and/or hetero-romantic orientations GITMS, all the shitty straight people will conclude that they get to define heterosexuality (which they don't).

**I'm a guy man in my mid-20s, and I'm getting more serious with a guy I met a few months ago. I was surprised to eventually learn that "Michael" is in his late 30s, since he easily passes for my age. I'm comfortable with the age gap, but I'm struggling with how to present this to my parents. Religious and conservative, they were cordial but distant with the last guy I dated (who was my age). I'm afraid the age gap with my new boyfriend will create even more discomfort for them and that Michael will sense it when he comes along to visit for the holidays. I'm considering lying to my parents if Michael's age comes up. I've challenged my parents' attitudes for many years—but at this point, I'm willing to trade honesty for the chance to be treated even a little bit more like a "normal couple" at Christmas. Is it selfish to ask Michael for permission to lie about his age? I'm nervous to even share my baggage with him, for fear it will give the impression I'm embarrassed by him.**
***Awkward Gatherings Expected Given Age Peculiarity***

Tell one lie to make your relationship seem more acceptable to your parents, and you'll have scripted to tell them more lies—and I don't know about you, AGEGAP, but not having to lie to mommy and daddy anymore was one of the reasons I came out of the closet. And if you want your parents to be comfortable with Michael, if you don't want them to think there's anything wrong with their son dating an older man, deceiving your parents about Michael's age is a terrible first move. That says you think there's something wrong it—and you won't just be saying that to your parents, AGEGAP, but you'll be saying it to Michael as well.

And let's say things work out with Michael. The lie you told that first Christmas will only serve to make things more awkward after you finally tell them the truth about your boyfriend's age. And if your parents are like other mildly or wildly homophobic parents, i.e., if they're inclined to regard the man who sodomizes their son as a negative influence in his life, they may not believe the lie was your idea. They'll think this creepily youthful older man—this man who showed up in their home wearing a suit made out of the skins of younger gay men—encouraged their son to lie to them so they wouldn't object to the relationship in the early stages, when their objections might have had the ability to derail it.

Finally, AGEGAP, if your older boyfriend is concerned you may be too immature for him—not all young people are immature and not all immature people are young, but this shit does correlate—telling him you're still in the lie-to-mommy-and-daddy stage might prompt him to end this relationship.

*On the Lovecast (savagelovecast.com): RealDoll brothels? Contact Dan via mail@savagelove.net, follow him on Twitter @fakedansavage, and visit ITMFA.org.*

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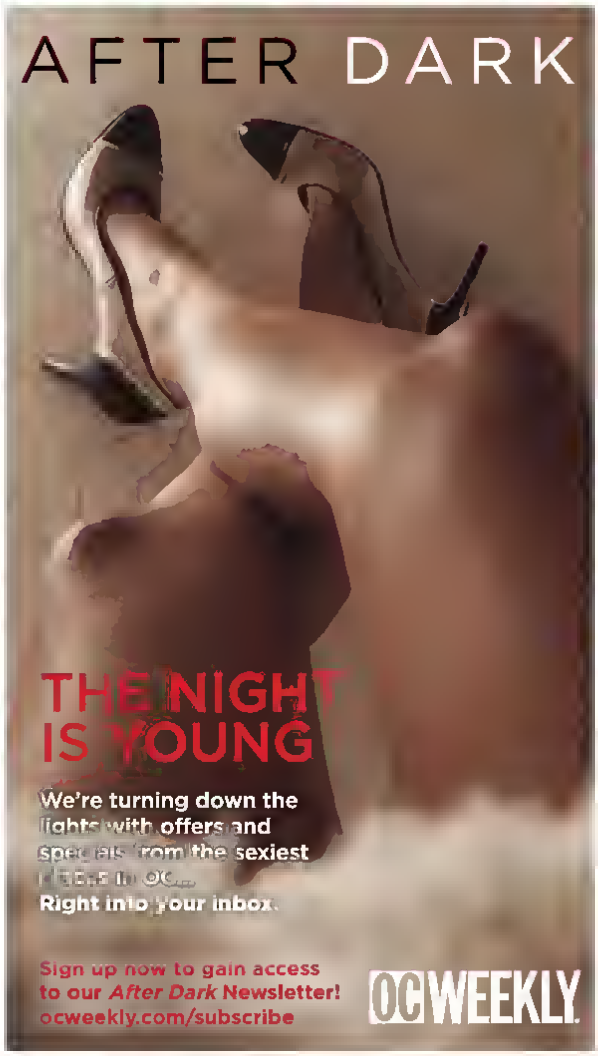
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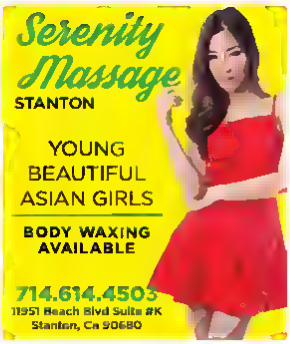
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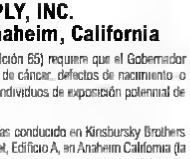

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# The Mighty 690

## How a border-blaster radio station led to an early '80s hunt for tens of thousands in buried cash

BY ALEXANDER HAMILTON CHERIN

As an 11-year-old kid in the summer of 1981, life was, by all discernible metrics, pretty cool. Even in the nascent months of Ronald Reagan's presidency, very little seemed of consequence—or even important, for that matter—in the lives of Southern California teenagers. Except perhaps for radio. And just like the physical ecosystem in which they operated, local radio stations had their own distinct pecking order. There was KROQ-FM 106.7 for the cool kids, KMET for those who adopted their parents' taste for classic rock and 91X from San Diego for the ultra-hip. But for the rest of us in the vast middle, there was the Mighty 690, a Top 40 station filled with booming voices of DJs with cool names such as Michael Boss and constant rotation of almost-caustic pop music.

Dating back to 1961, XETRA-AM, which advertised and branded itself as "The Mighty 690" during the 1980s, was one of many so-called "border-blaster radio stations," transmitting on a 10,000-watt platform from a tower located on the outskirts of Tijuana. In 1981, the concept of listening to a radio station broadcast from nearly 200 miles away was about as close to globalism as was available.

On one Sunday night in late June of that year, Michael Boss announced that the Mighty 690 would hold a contest dubbed the "Summer of $50,000." Details were to follow.

Radio contests were nothing new. But with the proliferation of new Southern California stations and formats, the ante had been raised, and listenership was competitive.

The station was going to literally bury $50,000 in cash somewhere between the international border and the San Fernando Valley, or as far as the signal would reach. Starting the following morning, the station would give out a series of cryptic clues that listeners would piece together to ultimately reveal the location of the buried treasure.

At its simplest, the contest had both the childish allure of a circus carnival and the sad sophisticatino of a technological medium realizing its limits. But for all of its possibilities, the contest was also a great equalizer. A listener from East L.A. had as much chance as an 11-year-old still trying to figure out sixth grade.

As I recall, the clues themselves were no more sophisticated than one of the Hardy Boys mystery books that were so popular in school libraries at the time. The first clue narrowed down the search area to "somewhere in Southern California." Although I can't recall with any specificity, the second clue was no more helpful than suggesting the money was buried either in downtown Los Angeles or near the water in San Diego. The third and fourth clues, as remembered, pointed to either dirt fields near Dodger Stadium or some unnamed sports venue in San Diego proper.

I do remember just as the clues began to narrow that I had convinced my grandfather, Max, to be at the ready sometime in the next week or two with his gold Oldsmobile Cutlass and a shovel. Just in case.

But I was too late.

On a Sunday that August, one of the DJs announced that the $50,000 had been found. I recall that the money was found by an immigrant family that figured out the clues and dug behind home plate at the old Jack Murphy Stadium in San Diego. But recollections like that are often rife with revisionist charm. I didn't know if I had remembered it right.

As it turns out, I hadn't.

The contest run by the Mighty 690 in 1981 actually had its origins a bit further east, in San Bernardino County. The idea for the "Summer of $50,000" was the brainchild of Ted Ziegoebusch, onetime station manager and program director during XETRA's formative years and now an "on-air" talent for KOST-FM in Los Angeles.

Ziegenbusch says he would listen to KMEN-AM as a child in the largely undeveloped areas of Upland and Pomona, roughly 60 miles east of Los Angeles. "The local radio station [KMEN] would periodically run a contest called 'Treasure Hunt,' where they would bury either a key or a chest with cash in a local farmer's field," he recalls. "The DJs on KMEN would give clues as to its whereabouts, and my friends and I would pore over a topographic map of the area with a magnifying glass, trying to pinpoint where it was." Local retailers would get in on the action by posting physical signs with the clues provided by KMEN in store windows or local garages for those who had missed the earlier radio broadcast. "You can't do anything like that anymore," Ziegenbusch lamented. "With the advent of social media, the secret would be out before the treasure was even buried."

MERCEDES DEL REAL

Desperate to heat the ratings of burgeoning competitors such as KFI, the Mighty 690 hired consultants for its contest, as well as to boost ratings. "But the station folks didn't like much of what they had to offer," Ziegenbusch says. "The concept for a buried treasure contest was gold."

Along with Chris Torick and Frank Felix, two other members of the programming staff at Mighty 690 during the early 1980s, Ziegenbusch distinctly recalls, the station intended to "milk the contest for as long as they could." As a result, most clues "walked a delicate balance between providing the exact location for the cash and stringing listeners along just enough that they would listen to what at the time were high-production-value commercials."

Of course Ziegenbusch was right—the contest lasted nearly 12 weeks and interest was perpetuated by word of mouth. In a stinging twist of irony, the actual money was not buried. In fact, it was not money at all. As Ziegenbusch corrected me, the treasure was actually an 8.5-inch-by-11-inch placard with a phone number the winner would call to arrange the pick up of a $50,000 check.

And the winner wasn't the immigrant family I had imagined, but rather an unemployed twentysomething who was still living with his parents. And the location? No digging required. The placard had been placed behind the license plate of an old Buick that had been parked at the Redondo Beach pier for nearly the entire summer.

So my recollection was not only off geographically by about 200 miles, but also the whole notion of buried treasure being unearthed in an archeological frenzy was totally wrong. But that's okay. Current consensus suggests that, as a society, we now seem more interested in debunking urban myths than celebrating them. That's too bad. When I regale my children with urban legends such as the Mighty 690 contest, their eyes tend to glaze over. But I'm hopeful that somewhere in between the Snapchatting and Instagram follows, they can pause—even if for a second—to look back at how cool inaccurate and faded memories can be.

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*Alex Cherin is an attorney and lobbyist based in Los Angeles.*

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